



**Teacher Resources to Prepare / Understand . . . ACT Writing Test  
Syllabus for Montana Educators  
November 5-December 7, 2012**

*Teacher Resources to Prepare / Understand . . . ACT Writing Test*

- The purpose of this course is to increase understanding of the ACT Writing Test and to help participants become skillful users of assignments that align to the Montana Common Core Standards for English Language Arts in their classrooms.
- Participants will closely examine materials available through ACT. In addition to reviewing MCCS for ELA, participants will focus on developing assignments that help students meet the standards.

**Assigned Readings**

- Students will read assigned articles provided by the instructor (Educators Guide to the ACT Writing Test, highlight segments of *Assignments Matter* by Eleanor Dougherty, and MCCS for ELA.

Online:

- The platform for the course is Adobe Connect, which is supported by the Office of Public Instruction.
- In order for participants to connect and listen to the sessions, they must have speakers and Adobe Flash Player, which is already installed on 98% of computers today.
- Technical support will be provided so that each participant or group will be able to participate fully in the discussion via technology.
- After registration for the course, instructions for accessing the online discussions will be sent to registrants.

**Class Personnel**

- Gail Surwill

**Assigned Readings:**

- **Week One:** [www.act.org](http://www.act.org)  
<http://www.act.org/standard/planact/writing/index.html>  
<http://act.org/standard/>
- **Week Two:** The  
ACT Educators  
Guide to the ACT Writing Test Pages 2-14 [http://www.act.org/aap/writing/pdf/educator\\_guide.pdf](http://www.act.org/aap/writing/pdf/educator_guide.pdf)  
[http://opi.mt.gov/Curriculum/montCAS/MCCS/index.php#gpm1\\_3](http://opi.mt.gov/Curriculum/montCAS/MCCS/index.php#gpm1_3) Writing Standards only
- **Week Three:** The ACT Educators Guide to the ACT Writing Test Pages 15-52  
[http://www.act.org/aap/writing/pdf/educator\\_guide.pdf](http://www.act.org/aap/writing/pdf/educator_guide.pdf)
- **Week Four:** The ACT Educators Guide to the ACT Writing Test Pages 53-58 and additional papers to practice scoring [http://www.act.org/aap/writing/pdf/educator\\_guide.pdf](http://www.act.org/aap/writing/pdf/educator_guide.pdf)
- **Week Five:** *Assignments Matter* page 7-32



## Assignments

1. **Weekly reading assignments and webinar viewing**
2. **Learning synthesis written responses** - Every week, participants will post a short reflection on their learning that is related to at least one of the reading assignments on the discussion board online. In addition, participants are expected to respond to the ideas raised in at least one other post by a classmate. This is all via the discussion board. The 2 reflective comments must be posted before the webinar viewing the following week. In these learning synthesis responses, you can identify ideas, language, concepts and terms that are new or challenging to you; you can explain what you value about the reading(s), connecting to ideas discussed in class or with your colleagues in the field; and /or you can discuss the relevance to your practice as an educator and school leader.
3. **Design two lesson plans integrating the MCCS for ELA and the ACT Writing Test new knowledge for the grade level you teach. If you are not a classroom teacher, develop a memo for a school leader outlining and recommending best practices in teaching and assessing writing for your school community to adopt.**

## Credits and Renewal Units:

Audience: Individual educators, teams of educators, pre-service teachers, curriculum specialists, or other school personnel. Participants are expected to have regular access to computers and proficiency with email and current web-browsers.

The class may be taken for graduate credits or renewal units or neither. During registration for the class, you will have the opportunity to choose credits or renewal units. It is the responsibility of degree-seeking participants to seek approval from their institutions to use this course toward meeting program requirements.

You will receive email confirmation of your registration for the class on the Office of Public Instruction website within five (5) business days. OPI will send a follow-up email regarding graduate credits, renewal units, and other class details.

- The class may be taken for 2 graduate credits. The approximate price is \$200. Information for registration for graduate credit can be obtained from the OPI Assessment Division staff. The course requirements for for-credit students are listed below.
- The class may be taken for 30 renewal units. Information will be included in a follow up email from OPI.



Activity / Assignment	Due Date	Points / Renewal Units possible
Webinar viewing and Online discussion reflecting on the webinar and one additional reading for the week	Weekly	50 points (10 pts/week) 10 Renewal Units (2 RUs/week)
Learning synthesis – reflective comment on a colleague’s post ( <i>In these learning synthesis responses, you can identify ideas, language, concepts and terms that are new or challenging to you; you can explain what you value about the reading(s), connecting to ideas discussed in class or with your colleagues in the field; and /or you can discuss the relevance to your practice as an educator and school leader. </i> )	Weekly	50 points (10 pts/week) 10 Renewal Units (2 RUs/week)
<u>Project:</u> Lesson Plan	11/30/12	10 points 5 Renewal Units
<u>Project:</u> Lesson Plan	12/12/12	10 points 5 Renewal Units

**Grading:** The total points associated with final grades are as follows:

A	120-113	B	103-96	C	91-87	D	79-77
A-	112-106	B-	97-94	C-	88-84	D-	76-72
B+	107-102	C+	95-90	D+	83-80	F	0-71

**Course Outline:**

	OBJECTIVES	OUTLINE of TOPICS
Module 1	<p><i>*Learn about the ACT College and Career Readiness Standards</i></p> <p><i>*Explore the Writing Standards</i></p> <p><i>*Learn about the resources available on the The ACT and the OPI MCCS website.</i></p> <p><i>* Consider how the ACT Writing Test expectations are likely to impact your writing program.</i></p>	<p>I. Overview of the ACT College and Career Readiness Standards</p> <p>II. ACT College and Career Readiness Standards: Writing <i>The Writing Test is a 30-minute essay test with a single prompt question. It is designed to evaluate student ability to make and articulate judgments, develop and sustain a position, organize and present ideas logically, and communicate clearly in original</i></p>

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		<p><i>writing.</i> When students take the ACT Plus Writing, they receive two additional scores: a combined English/Writing score and a subscore for the Writing Test.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expressing Judgments</li> <li>Focusing on the topic</li> <li>Developing a position</li> <li>Organizing Ideas</li> <li>Using Language</li> </ol> <p>III. Ideas for Progress <i>Great tool for teachers to find suggested activities to enhance student's skills in each writing-related strand organized by score ranges.</i></p>
Module 2	<p><i>*Explore the development of the ACT Writing Test .</i></p> <p><i>*Become familiar with the features of the ACT Writing Test</i></p>	<p>Overview of the ACT Writing Test</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development</li> <li>Features</li> <li>Essay Comments: <i>derived from the Scoring Rubric, are selected by ACT readers to help student writers understand the strengths and weaknesses of their essays. The Comments appear in their entirety on the Student Report. The code numbers for the selected Comments are listed on the High School and College Reports.</i></li> <li>Example Prompt</li> <li>Example Essays with Scoring Explanations</li> </ol>

Module 3	<p><i>*Examine the scoring rubric used in scoring the ACT Writing Test</i></p> <p><i>*Practice scoring anchor papers and understand the scoring key</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scoring Rubric</li> <li>Six-Point Holistic Rubric</li> <li>Anchor Set</li> <li>Practice Set</li> <li>Scoring Key</li> </ol>
Module 4	<p><i>*Understand how to use the Writing test results</i></p> <p><i>*Write a "writing Lesson" that incorporates the MCCS Writing Standards and your new</i></p>	<p>Using the Results</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scores and comments</li> <li>Norms</li> </ol>



	<i>understanding of the ACT Writing Test</i>	
Module 5	<i>*Explore the MCCS Wiki and determine useful resources for writing lesson plans to foster writing. *Write a “writing Lesson” that incorporates the MCCS Writing Standards and your new understanding of the ACT Writing Test</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>I. Research based recommendations for effective writing instruction and assessment</li><li>II. Argumentative writing</li><li>III. Scoring additional papers</li></ul>